

REV. GERALD PLESETZ

**DOCUMENTS PRODUCED BY THE ARCHDIOCESE OF LOS ANGELES 2013
PURSUANT TO JCCP 4286 SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT**

Vicar for Clergy Database

Clergy Assignment Record (Detailed)

Rev Gerald Plesetz

Current Primary Assignment

<i>Birth Date</i>	12/12/1942	<i>Age:</i>	70
<i>Birth Place</i>	Sheboygan, Wisconsin, USA	<i>Deanery:</i>	22
<i>Diaconate Ordination</i>			
<i>Priesthood Ordination</i>	5/23/1970		
<i>Diocese Name</i>	Diocese of Orange		
<i>Date of Incardination</i>	5/23/1970		
<i>Religious Community</i>			
<i>Ritual Ascription</i>	Latin		
<i>Ministry Status</i>	Left Archdiocese		
<i>Canon State</i>	Diocesan Priest	<i>Incard Process</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Begin Pension Date</i>			

Seminary St. John's Seminary, Camarillo
Ethnicity

Fingerprint Verification and Safeguard Training

Date Background Check
Virtus Training Date

Assignment History

Fr. Gerald Plesetz**Draft dates from Victims & files**

May 1970	Ordained in Los Angeles (verified in '72 directory)
	First assignment – St. Rose of Lima no verification ?
May 71- 72	St. Rose of Lima, Maywood (verified in L.A. / Orange Directory)
March 2, 1972	St. Edward's Parish, Dana Point REDACTED – Victim says)
1972-76	St. Edward's (L.A./Orange Directory)
REDACTED 1975	Birth of child – REDACTED (age 16) and Plesetz (age 32) in San Diego Child put up for adoption. Plesetz signs adoption papers. Verified by REDACTED
“Retreat 1975”	Parish told “ Fr. Plesetz is on Retreat”. Victim says he had a breakdown and “was hospitalized after the birth of the child” (victim REDACTED). REDACTED continues studies at Mater Dei and graduates from there.
March 29, 1976	Letter to Pastor informing of Fr. Plesetz assigned to St. Bridget, Van Nuys from St. Edward's, Dana Point effective May 1, 1976
May 1, 1976	Fr. Plesetz assignment effective at St Bridget of Sweden, Van Nuys (about 10 weeks at St. Bridget's 5/1/76 - 7/12/76)
June 23, 1976	Request granted to Plesetz to be changed to Orange Diocese “excardination documented”. Effective 7/12/76 (Document – letter 6/23/76 to Plesetz)
July 12, 1976	Priest of New Diocese of Orange
July 1976	St. Cecilia's Tustin (Exact dates - Need to be verified)
1977	Leave of absence (Needs to be verified)
REDACTED 1977	Marriage to REDACTED , Verified Marriage License
May 4, 1978	REDACREDACTED
June 16, 1978	Laicized documented
<u>Other data:</u>	
July 3, 1974	Police report made by REDACTED REDACTED in Orange County July 2002 regarding her minor victimization at age 15/16. “Gerry gave a full

confession to the police. He apologized to me. He lied bold face to me. He had no rehab.”^{REDACTED} “Mom thinks they knew (Diocese of Orange).” Her parents knew and took her to San Diego to have the baby. She said that she insisted that her parents let her finish school at Mater Dei.

“Priest” In St. Matthew’s Ecumenical Catholic Church listed on internet.
Length of time there unknown.

REDACTED REDACTED)ACTED

Gerry Plesetz County of Orange works in Health Services, as Alcohol and Drug Counselor. Fr. Gerald Plesetz does marriages at St. Matthew’s Ecumenical Catholic Church.
First wife died ^{REDACTED}when his ^{REDACTED} child was 5 years old.
Daughter, ^{REDACTED} now 18 years old. Divorced second and third wives. ^{REDACTED} x -- - ,

Kenedy Directory Listings apply to previous year 1977 page 623; 1978 page 629 listed “inactive”; 1979 not listed.

Request: ^{REDACTED} requested a letter to St. Matthew’s Ecumenical Church regarding his vicimization of women. 7/9/02 requested & sent

REDACTED REDACTED

Orange.

SACRA CONGREGATIO
PRO DOCTRINA FIDEI

PROT. N. 2524/77s.

COPY

CONFIDENTIAL

Excellentissime Domine,

Dnus GERALDUS JOHANNES PLESETZ, sacerdos dioe-
cesis Arausicanae in California

petiit reductionem ad statum laicalem cum dispensatione ab omnibus
oneribus e sacris Ordinibus (et a religiosa Professione) manantibus,
non excepto onere servandi legem sacri coelibatus.

SS.mus D. N. PAULUS, Divina Providentia Papa VI,
die 16 Iunii 1978, habita relatione de casu a Sacra Con-
gregatione Pro Doctrina Fidei, adnuere dignatus est pro gratia iuxta
sequentes Normas:

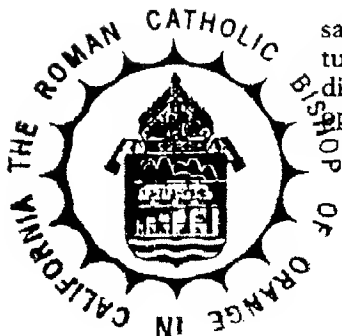
1. Rescriptum complectitur inseparabiliter reductionem ad statum
laicalem et dispensationem ab oneribus ex sacris ordinibus manantibus.
Numquam oratori fas est duo illa elementa seiungere, seu alterum
accipere et prius recusare. Si orator est religiosus, Rescriptum continet
etiam dispensationem a votis.

Ipsam insuper, quatenus opus sit, secumfert absolutionem a con-
tractis censuris et legitimationem prolis.

Rescriptum vim suam exserit a momento notificationis a competenti
Praelato oratori factae.

2. Si orator est sacerdos dioecesanus extra propriam dioecesim
versans, vel religiosus, Ordinarius loci incardinationis vel Superior
religiosus maior Ordinarius loci commorationis habitualis oratoris cer-
tiorum faciet de pontificia dispensatione, eumque, si casus ferat, roga-
bit ut Rescriptum cum oratore communicet et necessariam delegationem
pro matrimonii canonici celebratione concedat. Si vero peculiares cir-
cumstantiae aliud suadeant, praedictus Ordinarius ad Sacram Congre-
gationem recurat.

3. Per se sacerdos ad statum laicalem redactus et ab oneribus cum
sacerdotio conexis dispensatus, et a fortiori sacerdos matrimonio iunc-
tus, abesse debet a locis in quibus notus est eius status sacerdotalis. Or-
dinarius loci commorationis oratoris, de communi consilio, quatenus
opus sit, cum Ordinario proprio incardinationis vel cum Superiore



35695

maiore religioso, dispensare poterit ab ista clausula Rescriptum afficiente, si oratoris dispensati praesentia scandalum paritura non praevideatur.

4. Quod attinet ad celebrationem canonici matrimonii, per se Ordinarius curet ut a quacumque pompa vel adparatu absterneatur et coram sacerdote probato ac sine testibus vel, si opus fuerit, cum duobus testibus, illud peragatur, cuius acta in secreto Curiae tabulario adserventur.

Ad Ordinarium loci commorationis una cum Praelato proprio oratoris, sive dioecetano sive religioso, pertinet determinare quomodo dispensatio, et pariter celebratio matrimonii, secreto sit tegenda vel communicari possit, debitis sub cautionibus, cum oratoris propinquis, amicis et conductoribus (datore di lavoro, employeur, employer), ut bonae famae ipsius oratoris consultum sit iuribusque oeconomico-socialibus ex novo statu laici et uxorati manantibus.

5. In Libris baptizatorum paroeciae sive oratoris sive compartis adnotetur consulendum esse Ordinarium loci si quando notitia vel documenta exquirantur.

6. Ordinarius, ad quem spectat Rescriptum cum oratore communicare, hunc enixe hortetur, ut vitam Populi Dei, ratione congruente cum nova eius vivendi condicione, participet, aedificationem praestet, et ita amantissimum Ecclesiae filium se exhibeat. Simul autem eidem notum faciat cuilibet sacerdoti ad statum laicalem redacto et ab oneribus dispensato vetitum esse ne:

a) ullam ordinis sacri functionem peragat, salvo iis quae habentur can. 882 et 892 par. 2;

b) ullam partem liturgicam agat in celebrationibus cum populo, ubi eius condicio est nota, neve umquam homiliam habeat;

c) ullum officium pastorale gerat;

d) munere Rectoris (vel alio munere directivo), Directoris spiritualis et Docentis fungatur in Seminariis, Facultatibus Theologicis et similibus Institutis;

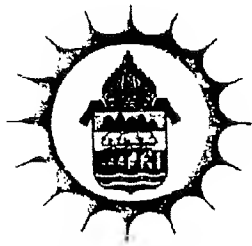
e) itemque ne munere Directoris scholae catholicae neve munere magistri religionis in quibuslibet scholis, catholicis aut secus, fungatur. Attamen Ordinarius loci, pro suo prudenti iudicio, potest in casibus particularibus permittere ut sacerdos, ad statum laicalem redactus et ab oneribus cum sacra ordinatione conexis dispensatus, religionem doceat in scholis publicis, ex exceptione etiam in scholis catholicis, dummodo ne scandalum aut admiratio sit timendum.

Denique Ordinarius ei aliquod opus pietatis vel caritatis imponat. Tempore autem opportuno curet brevius referre ad Sacram Congregationem de peracta executione, et si qua tandem fidelium admiratio exoriat, prudenti explicatione providere.

Contrariis quibuscumque minime obstantibus.

Ex Aedibus S. C. Pro Doctrina Fidei, die 16 Iunii 1978.

Alfredo Borm. Lucca

**DIOCESE OF ORANGE**

440 SOUTH BATAVIA ST.

ORANGE, CALIFORNIA 92668

714 - 639-8010 - 639-8011

ACCEPTANCE OF CONDITIONS OF DISPENSATION

I, Gerald J. Plesetz, a priest of the Diocese of Orange, California, having been dispensed from all the obligations of Sacred Orders including celibacy, hereby accept the conditions laid down by the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in its rescript Prot. N. 2524/77 S, granted June 16, 1978, namely:

1. To participate in the life of the People of God in a manner consistent with my new life style and to lead an exemplary and edifying life as a loyal son of the Church;
2. Not to perform any functions whatsoever of Holy Orders (with the exception of the administration of the Sacrament of Penance in danger of death, as provided in Canonons 882 and 892, p. 2, Code of Canon Law);
- 3) Not to conduct any liturgical services whatsoever in the presence of the people, in places where my condition is known;
- 4) In no circumstances to preach;
- 5) Not to carry out pastoral duties;
- 6) Not to hold positions of administration, spiritual direction, or teaching in seminaries, theological faculties or similar institutions;
- 7) Not to be a principal of a Catholic school and not to teach religion in any school, Catholic or non-Catholic. In a particular situation, in which there will be no scandal or disedification, I will first consult the local Ordinary;
- 8) To remain away from places where my priestly state is known, unless the local Ordinary grants a dispensation;
- 9) To observe the directives of the local Ordinary concerning the secrecy or divulging of the dispensation and the celebration of marriage.

given at Pastoral Service Office

Orange, Calif

on July 5, 1978

Gerald J. Plesetz

REDACTED

PROT. N. 2524/77s



00193 Roma 10/1/1978
F del S. Ufficio, 11

S. Congregatio pro Doctrina Fidei istam Rev.mam
Curiam certiozem facit acta in causa
d. ni PLESETZ Gerald J.

huc rite pervenisse.

Exitus vero praedictae causae suo tempore notus fiet.

N. B. -Compleantur acta: a) afferendo quaedam testimo-
nia e confratribus et superioribus oratoris;
b)exquirendo accuratam relationem a medico psy-
chologo qui oratorem, post ordinationem, habuit
uti curis indigentem.

CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRY OF MARRIAGE										12578
(PERSONAL DATA, LICENSE TO MARRY, CERTIFICATION OF MARRIAGE)										LOCAL REGISTRAR'S NUMBER
1a. NAME OF GROOM—FIRST NAME		1b. MIDDLE NAME		1c. LAST NAME		2. DATE OF BIRTH				
Gerald		John		Plesetz		REDACTED				
3. AGE	4. NUMBER OF THIS MARRIAGE	5a. DATE LAST MARRIAGE ENDED		5b. LAST MARRIAGE ENDED BY		6. BIRTHPLACE				
34	1	X X X		X X X		Wisconsin				
7a. RESIDENCE OF GROOM—STREET ADDRESS						7b. CITY OR TOWN		7c. COUNTY		
REDACTED						Tustin		Orange		
8a. BUSINESS						9. HIGHEST SCHOOL GRADE COMPLETED				
						21				
10a. NAME OF FATHER OF GROOM				10b. BIRTHPLACE OF FATHER		11a. MAIDEN NAME OF MOTHER OF GROOM		11b. BIRTHPLACE OF MOTHER		
REDACTED				REDACTED		REDACTED		REDACTED		
12a. NAME OF BRIDE—FIRST NAME		12b. MIDDLE NAME		12c. LAST NAME		13. DATE OF BIRTH				
REDACTED		REDACTED		REDACTED		REDACTED				
14. AGE	15. NUMBER OF THIS MARRIAGE	16a. DATE LAST MARRIAGE ENDED		16b. LAST MARRIAGE ENDED BY		17. BIRTHPLACE				
27	1	X X X		X X X		California				
18a. RESIDENCE OF BRIDE—STREET ADDRESS						18b. CITY OR TOWN		18c. COUNTY		
REDACTED						Tustin		Orange		
19a. PRESENT OR LAST OCCUPATION		19b. KIND OF INDUSTRY OR BUSINESS		20. HIGHEST SCHOOL GRADE COMPLETED		21. MAIDEN NAME OF BRIDE				
Stewardess		Airlines		15		X X X				
22a. NAME OF FATHER OF BRIDE		22b. BIRTHPLACE OF FATHER		23a. MAIDEN NAME OF MOTHER OF BRIDE		23b. BIRTHPLACE OF MOTHER				
REDACTED		Illinois		REDACTED		Arkansas				
AFFIDAVIT OF BRIDE AND GROOM										
WE THE BRIDE AND GROOM NAMED IN THIS CERTIFICATE, EACH FOR HIMSELF, STATE THAT THE FOREGOING INFORMATION IS CORRECT TO THE BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF THAT NO LEGAL OBJECTION TO THE MARRIAGE NOR TO THE ISSUANCE OF A LICENSE TO AUTHORIZE THE SAME IS KNOWN TO US AND HEREBY APPLY FOR LICENSE TO MARRY										
24a. BRIDE (SIGNATURE)					24b. GROOM (SIGNATURE)					
REDACTED					Gerald John Plesetz					
LICENSE TO MARRY										
25a. SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO BEFORE ME ON		25b. DATE LICENSE ISSUED		25c. LICENSE NUMBER		25d. COUNTY CLERK				
7658		12/1/1977		REDACTED		REDACTED				
		25e. EXPIRATION DATE		25f. COUNTY OF ISSUE OF LICENSE						
		3/1/1978		ORANGE						
WITNESSES										
19a. SIGNATURE OF WITNESS					19b. ADDRESS OF WITNESS					
REDACTED					REDACTED					
CERTIFICATION OF PERSON PERFORMING CEREMONY										
26. I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THE ABOVE NAMED BRIDE AND GROOM WERE JOINED BY ME IN MARRIAGE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LAWS OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA										
ON December 3, 1977										
AT Tustin, California										
LOCAL REGISTRAR OF MARRIAGES										
30. DATE ACCEPTED FOR REGISTRATION					31. LOCAL REGISTRAR'S SIGNATURE					
DEC 6 1977					REDACTED					

35698

Clergy Misconduct

Adult Sexual Abuse

Case: ^{REDACTED} / Plesetz
Two cases for Perpetrator

Survivor-victim: REDACTED

Counselee: Age 24 time of incidents of violation

Pastor Counselor: Fr. Gerald Plesetz
St. Edward's Parish
Dana Point, CA

REDACTED

REDACTED ^{REDACTED} She is aware that REDACTED has reported her story of being 16 years old and having a child by Gerald Plesetz. REDACTED is living in REDACTED CA. The other woman is living in REDACTED

In 1978, ^{REDACTED} said that she was seeing Fr. Plesetz for counseling. She said that she went to see him for counseling because she was vulnerable at the time. She said that it was not rape because it was not violent.

REDACTED: was aware there was another woman victimized by Gerry Plesetz. She did not mention talking with the other woman. We know that REDACTED; daughter has made contact with REDACTED in search of her half sister. The communication as reported by REDACTED REDACTED; had been positive. See case of REDACTED / Plesetz.

REDACTED: said that she was aware of the following timeline. "Fr. Plesetz was At St. Edward's in Dana Point, CA 1974. He had a leave of absence in 1977. That he had gone to St. Elizabeth's in Van Nuys and returned to Orange County. He had been assigned to St. Cecilia's in Tustin. He had left and married. REDACTED

REDACTED

REDACTED He is a Catholic and is a lay priest in Orange County Diocese."

REDACTED: said that "I am not seeking to hurt the 18 year old daughter of Gerry Plesetz. I am not revengeful."

REDACTED offered counseling for REDACTED and her daughter. Did not differentiate which Diocese may be responsible or what is known of Fr. Plesetz history. Msgr. Cox is aware and will communicate with Orange Diocese, Msgr. Urell.

REDACTED :D
REDACTED

Clergy Misconduct

Suspected Child Abuse

Case: ^{REDACTED} / Plesetz
One of 2 cases

Survivor-victim:

REDACTED

e-mail:

Phone:

Perpetrator:

Fr. Gerald Plesetz Ordained 1970
Currently married

A child was Born^{REDACTED} to a 16 year old girl
Fr. Plesetz signed adoption papers in San Diego for his
daughter under similar spelling pseudonym.

Reported:

REDACTED recently made a report to the Seattle Police.

In April 2002, we received a phone call from a ^{REDACTED}. She said she had been encouraged by a seminarian, ^{REDACTED}, who was studying in Chicago to make a report to the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. She would not give her full name or phone number saying she wasn't sure she wanted to make a full report. She said that she was calling from out of State. She said that Fr. Gerald Plesetz was the father of her daughter. She had been a student in a Catholic High School when she became pregnant. At the time of her call she was unwilling to call a detective to report this criminal act.

On June 4, 2002, ^{REDACTED} gave her name as ^{REDACTED}, who had called before. She gave her full story. ^{REDACTED} was a 16 year old girl studying at Mater Dei High School and a parishioner at St. Edward's in Dana Point, CA. She became pregnant in approximately October 1974. She said Fr. Plesetz gave her a Doctor's name and offered to take her to the Doctor. Her daughter, ^{REDACTED} was born on ^{REDACTED}. ^{REDACTED} said that her parents protected the priest while she was a student at Mater Dei Catholic High School. ^{REDACTED} said the counselors at school asked her several times if everything was alright. Her older sister was a ^{REDACTED} at Mater Dei and she wonders if they also asked her questions. Her parents had taken her to the Community Health Center because they knew they was going to do an adoption. Her parents took her to Catholic Community Service in San Diego to give birth to the child and because she was 16 years old at the time she gave the child up for adoption. ^{REDACTED} thinks that Fr. Plesetz was about 32 years old at that time. Fr. Plesetz signed the adoption papers she said with a variation on the spelling of his last name. They named the child ^{REDACTED}. She has had no contact with ^{REDACTED} since birth.

^{REDACTED} ACTED

REDACTED

REDACTED

35701

XV 000009

REDACTED

REDACTED

REDACTED

REDACTED

REDACTED

REDACTED

REDACTED is fearful that she might lose her job teaching in a Catholic School. I said that she was a minor and not responsible. Fr. Plesetz was in a position of power and trust and betrayed you. She has been in therapy since she was 18 years old.

Dr. REDACTED research (June 5, 2002) regarding Fr. Gerald Plesetz is as follows: REDACTED reported that Fr. Plesetz had left ministry and married.

Dr. REDACTED contacted Catholic Charities in San Diego contact person REDACTED REDACTED she was away. REDACTED had asked for some help with the record of the adoption.

Los Angeles Archdiocese did not have Plesetz file but Dr. REDACTED did find Fr. Pletz in the Diocesan Directory for 1976 at St. Edward's in Dana Point, CA in 1974-76.

On June 17, 2002, a second victim called to report paternity by Fr. Gerry Plesetz. Her daughter is REDACTED. Her story is in a separate report. REDACTED was born in REDACTED Fr. Plesetz was on a leave of absence in 1977. In 1978, REDACTED Mother was receiving counseling at St. Edward's from Fr. Plesetz at the time of conception. She was 24 when REDACTED was born.

It has been reported by REDACTED Mother that Mr. Gerry Plesetz, MFCC is currently a licensed Marriage Child and Family Counselor working at the Orange County Health Services. He is an alcohol and Drug Counselor. It is believed that he is an active Catholic and belongs to some group of former priests. REDACTED and her Mother live in Orange County.

REDACTED REDACTED
Assistance Ministry
June 17, 2002

35702

XV 000010

DIOCESE OF ORANGE



JUN 20

OFFICE OF VICAR GENERAL /
MODERATOR THE CURIA
MARYWOOD CENTER
P.O. BOX 14195
2811 E. VILLA REAL DRIVE
ORANGE, CALIFORNIA 92863-1595
PHONE (714) 282-3000
REDACTED

June 19, 2002

Reverend Craig A. Cox, J.C.D.
Vicar for Clergy
Archdiocese of Los Angeles
3424 Wilshire Boulevard
Los Angeles, California 90010-2241

Dear Monsignor Cox,

I am responding to your phone call yesterday regarding the status of (Rev) Gerald Plesetz.

I am enclosing a copy of the rescript granted for his laicization (dated June 16, 1978), which was officially accepted by him on July 5, 1978 (copy also included).

Regarding his personnel file, there is no trace of one to be found. REDACTED secretaries have been looking, to no avail. The rescripts from all laicization cases are kept in the Office of Canonical Services (hence, the copies are available). We even contacted (Re)REDACTED former Judicial Vicar, to whom all of the laicization cases were given some time ago, and he seems to remember that the Diocese of Orange did not have Gerald Plesetz's personnel file, but rather it was in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles (because all of this happened so soon after the Diocese of Orange was established on June 18, 1976). (Note the Prot.N. on the rescript (2542/77). The official Kenedy Directory has Gerald Plesetz listed at St. Cecilia Parish, Tustin, in the 1977 edition (for the year 1976); in the 1978 edition (for the year 1977), he is listed as "inactive leave". He is not listed in the 1979 edition.

Lastly, though, the rescript is signed by Msgr. Harry Trower, who was the Vicar General for the Diocese of Orange in 1978.

This is all we have. I hope it is of some help to you. Kindly let me know if there is more that is needed in REDACTED absence.

With kindest personal regards, I am

Fraternally yours in Christ,

Reverend Monsignor John Urell, V.G.
Vicar General / Moderator of the Curia

C: Maria Schinderle, Diocese of Orange

enclosure

35694



Archdiocese of Los Angeles

Office of
Vicar for Clergy
(213) 637-7284

3424
Wilshire
Boulevard

Los Angeles
California
90010-2241

June 22, 2002

Monsignor John Urell
Diocese of Orange
P.O. Box 14195
Orange, CA 92867

Dear Monsignor Urell:


Thank you very much for your letter of June 19, 2002, enclosing the copies of the rescript of laicization granted to Gerald J. Plesetz. I will check with REDACTED to see if we have his personnel file in our archives.

Enclosed for your records are copies of two reports taken by REDACTED DACTED concerning allegations of sexual misconduct by Gerald Plesetz. As you can see, the first report (REDACTED) alleges sexual misconduct with a minor in 1974 – 1975 before the formation of the Diocese of Orange. The second report REDACTED involves sexual misconduct with an adult, apparently in 1977 – 1978, after the formation of the Diocese of Orange and right at the time that then Father Plesetz was leaving the active ministry.

REDACTED has offered counseling and pastoral outreach to REDACTED. We will continue to assume responsibility for appropriate care for her. REDACTED made an initial offer of counseling to REDACTED. Since it appears that this particular incident of misconduct may have occurred after the Diocese of Orange was founded, would you please have REDACTED contact REDACTED. Between them they can discuss continued pastoral outreach to REDACTED.

Thank you for your attention to these matters. May God continue to bless you.

Yours in Christ,


Monsignor Craig A. Cox, J.C.D.
Vicar for Clergy

enclosures

cc REDACTED REDACTED

35693

OFFICE OF THE VICAR FOR CLERGY

TO: REDACTED REDACTED
REDACTED

FROM:

RE: *Father Gerald J. Plesetz*

DATE: July 8, 2002

Monsignor Cox is wondering if you would have the file of Father Gerald J. Plesetz. REDACTED requested his file from the Diocese of Orange, but Monsignor Urell notified him that they do not have it. They only had a copy of the rescript granted for his laicization (dated June 16, 1978), which was officially accepted by him on July 5, 1978.

In the 1977 edition of the Kenedy Directory, he was listed at Saint Cecilia Parish in Tustin. In the 1978, he was listed as "inactive leave."

Any information you would have regarding this priest would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

— o — REDACTED

1976 - St. Edwards, Dana Point

REDACTED
Ber

7/8/02
- no file exists for the priest

35692

Los Angeles Times

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2002

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Sting Leads to Sex Abuse Charge Against Ex-Priest

Catholics: Orange man's arrest is the first to result from molestation allegations in Southland.

By WILLIAM LOBDELL
and CHRISTINE HANLEY
TIMES STAFF WRITERS

Orange County authorities arrested a former Catholic priest Tuesday on suspicion of sexually abusing a teenage girl in the 1970s after the man allegedly confessed to an undercover deputy posing as his out-of-wedlock daughter.

Gerald John Plesetz, 59, of Orange is the first priest to be criminally charged with sexually abusing victims in Los Angeles or Orange counties since the Roman Catholic sex scandal broke nine months ago. Plesetz, who left the priesthood in the late 1970s and works as an administrator for the Orange County Health Care Agency, was charged with three counts of oral copulation with a minor under the age of 16. It's unclear why prosecutors did not charge him with statutory rape; they accuse Plesetz in court documents of impregnating the girl.

Officials with the Orange County district attorney's office said that in child abuse cases, the statute of limitations does not begin until the victim comes forward no matter how long ago the alleged crime occurred. Charges must be filed within a year of that date.

Plesetz's arrest caps a four-month investigation into crimes authorities said occurred from 1972 to 1974, when Plesetz was a pastor at St. Edward Catholic Church in Dana Point.

It comes as advocates for victims of priest abuse criticize law enforcement for not filing criminal charges in most cases.

The alleged victim, identified in the criminal complaint as "Janet M.," first met the priest when she was a 13-year-old singer in the church choir.

Prosecutors charge that Plesetz repeatedly abused her—acts that ended when she became pregnant.

The priest met with the girl's parents and arranged to pay all expenses related to the pregnancy, according to court records. The baby girl, Jennifer, was put up for adoption.

Authorities became aware of the incident in June, when Janet M.

Please see PRIEST, A28

A28 WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2002

PRIEST: Arrest Is 1st Locally in Scandal

Continued from A1

filed a complaint with the Orange County Sheriff's Department.

Jim Amorino, a sheriff's spokesman, said he didn't know why she decided to come forward.

"I don't know if she lived that long with anger or what had happened," he said.

Investigators set up a sting two weeks later.

It began July 1 when the woman called Plesetz and told him that the daughter she had given up for adoption 27 years ago wanted to meet him.

"You're kidding me—that's Jen, Jennifer," said Plesetz in a secretly taped phone conversation detailed in the criminal complaint.

The next day, Plesetz met with

confronted Plesetz, and he confessed to the crimes, prosecutors said in court records.

But he was not arrested at that time. The case was temporarily shelved because of the high-profile July 15 kidnapping of 5-year-old Samantha Runion, which diverted department resources.

Detectives continued to build their case over the last two months and arrested Plesetz at his home Tuesday. He was being held late Tuesday at the Men's Central Jail in Santa Ana on \$50,000 bail. He is scheduled to be arraigned Thursday.

Plesetz is the fifth priest from St. Edward Catholic Church to be accused of abusing minors over the last three decades. None of the

other priests have been charged. "We're shocked, saddened and heartsick," said Bishop Tod D. Brown of the Diocese of Orange, after being told of the arrest. "Our hearts go out to the victim."

Advocates for victims of priest abuse described the arrest as a milestone. "I think when victims hear about this arrest it's going to give them hope," said Mary Grant, a Los Angeles-based director of Survivors Network of Those Abused by Priests. "It's been a long process for victims—hundreds have come forward. This is a sign that this is being taken seriously."

While the Catholic Church in Southern California and across the nation has paid out millions of dollars to abuse victims who filed civil

suits, criminal charges against priests remain relatively rare.

Hemmed in by statute of limitations laws, faded memories, little corroborating evidence and the power of the priesthood and Catholic Church, prosecutors have put few clerics in jail for sexually abusing minors.

Covertly recorded phone calls and meetings are an increasingly common device for gathering evidence in decades-old abuse cases where evidence is slim.

In Los Angeles, Catholic officials are bracing for possible indictments of 15 current and former priests on felony sex charges, according to law enforcement sources. In Orange County, a handful of priests are under criminal investigation.

Times staff writers Stuart Pfeiffer and Richard Winton contributed to this report.

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"The defendant is a lifelong resident of the area. There is only one victim here," Stier said. He said the number of counts against his client had grown from 13 listed in the arrest warrant Wednesday to 29 Thursday.

The man who prosecutors allege Baker molested said Thursday that the charges have been a "long time coming."

The man said he was abused repeatedly by Baker at St. Paul of the Cross Church in La Mirada, according to a lawsuit he and several others filed earlier this year.

He said prosecutors have asked that he not discuss specific events. Previously he told The Times that Baker would arrange to have him spend the night at the St. Paul rectory and that the abuse started off "very subtly" and then progressed.

Rodriguez, who resigned from the priesthood in 1993, was arraigned Thursday afternoon in a courtroom in downtown Los Angeles on eight counts of committing lewd acts upon a child under the age of 14.

Handcuffed and standing behind a glass wall, Rodriguez pleaded not guilty.

Deputy Dist. Atty. Hiller Meritt wrote in the complaint that there is independent evidence—another "witness—that "clearly and convincingly corroborates the victim's allegations" that he was sexually molested by Rodriguez.

Los Angeles County Superior Court Commissioner Jeffrey M. Harkavy set a preliminary hearing

'He feels he was very immature at the time.'

Peter Hickman, bishop, St. Matthew Church

Accused Ex-Priest Reveals His Struggle

Crime: Facing sex abuse charges, the Orange man says: 'I regret and have shame about this.'

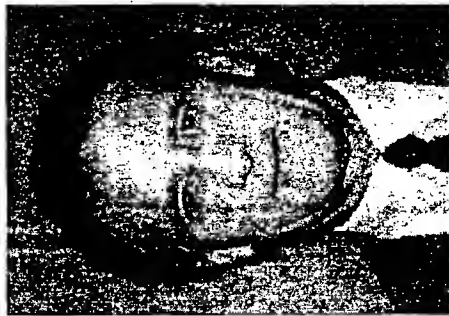
By CHRISTINE HANLEY and MONTE MORIN
TIMES STAFF WRITERS

A former priest charged with sexually abusing a teenage girl with whom he fathered a child nearly three decades ago expressed regret Thursday for what happened and said he's praying for the woman.

In an interview a day after he was released from jail on \$50,000 bail, Gerald J. Plesetz spoke candidly about his struggles in the Roman Catholic Church and his decision to give up the priesthood soon after the woman—identified by authorities as "Janet M."—became pregnant.

"I regret and have shame about this," Plesetz said. "I pray and sincerely hope that Janet isn't scarred from this."

Plesetz, 59, was arrested Tuesday on three counts of oral copulation with a minor under the age of 16, becoming the first priest to be criminally charged with sexual abuse in Los Angeles and Orange counties since the Roman Catholic sex scandal broke nine months ago. On Wednesday, Los Angeles authorities arrested two other



Gerald J. Plesetz was arrested on three counts of oral copulation with a minor under age 16. Priests accused of molestation.

The Orange County Sheriff's Department arrested Plesetz after he allegedly confessed to an undercover officer posing as his out-of-wedlock daughter.

Plesetz would not discuss specifics of the allegations against him, saying he has not yet talked to an attorney.

The closest Plesetz came to explaining his relationship with Janet M. was when he described how lonely it was working in south Orange County during the 1970s, when the alleged crimes occurred.

He was assigned to St. Edward Catholic Church in Dana Point, where Janet M. sang in the choir. The area, he said, was far removed from the fellow priests he befriended through the Archdiocese of Los Angeles.

"Dana Point was an outpost of the diocese.... You lose a sense of community and camaraderie with your fellow priests," he said. "I was in an isolated situation."

Plesetz said he left the church because he wanted to have a family.

"I left once I was clear about what I wanted in my life," he said.

He married his wife, Sandy, a flight attendant, in December 1977.

The couple had a daughter in 1984. A year later, Sandy died of cancer. Plesetz has been a single father ever since.

With his second daughter, now 18, never straying far from his side during Thursday's interview, Plesetz said he's tried to be honest with everyone close to him about his first daughter. The girl was given up for adoption and, according to Plesetz, has been receiving child support payments from him over the years.

"Anyone I ever got close to knew," he said. "It would not be fair for them not to know."

But the bishop of a church where Plesetz served as a part-time priest said Thursday he was shocked when he heard the alle-

gations this summer.

Plesetz served at St. Matthew Church in Orange from 1997 until July of this year, according to Bishop Peter Hickman. St. Matthew Church is affiliated with the Old Catholic ecumenical movement and allows priests to marry.

Hickman received a letter in July from the Los Angeles Archdiocese reporting allegations of misconduct against Plesetz.

Hickman said he met with Plesetz and another priest on July 16 and confronted him with the accusations.

"He said it was true and he apologized for not telling us before," Hickman said.

"He said he had carried this for the last 27 or 28 years and that he has always regretted it. He feels he was very immature at the time and that it was a very foolish and very terrible thing that he did. It happened when he was newly ordained."

Plesetz said he plans to return to his job as an administrator with the Orange County Health Care Agency next week. He took the job in 1986 because it allowed him to help people—as a priest would—while being allowed to have a family.

At his home in Orange on Thursday, he tried to relax by strumming his guitar and—in what he called a symbolic gesture—listening to Bob Dylan sing "I Shall Be Released."

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